Matthias Engel - Traben-Trarbach - English

Two men sharing the same name—Matthias Engel, father and son—contributed to the development of Traben-Trarbach during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The elder Matthias Engel brought with him the expertise of a trained ironworker: casting, forging, and design. His son—also named Matthias Engel—continued this creative legacy as a master builder. Together, they created buildings and monuments that continue to shape the townscape to this day. Much of their work has become an unremarkable part of everyday life, yet the traces left by both men remain unmistakable. This story presents their collective body of work and places it within its historical context—ensuring that the legacy the father and son bequeathed to Traben-Trarbach remains visible.

Eisenschmitt

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Mathias Engel and Mathias Engel

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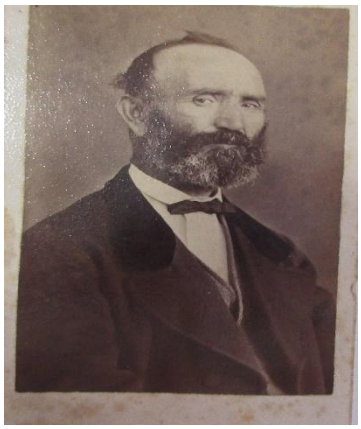
A Puzzle Yet to Be Solved

MATHIAS ENGEL AND MATHIAS ENGEL



Two men sharing the same name—Matthias Engel—shaped Traben-Trarbach in a way that, regrettably, often goes overlooked today. The elder of the two, born in 1824 in Spangdahlem, hailed from the rugged, industrious world of the Eifel ironworks. At the ironworks in Eisenhütte/Eisenschmitt, he mastered every facet of working with iron: casting, shaping, and design. Powered by the flow of the River Salm and the charcoal harvested from the surrounding forests, this small foundry served as both his school and his foundation.

It was likely this very blend of craftsmanship and creativity that earned him the invitation to contribute to the town's War Memorial. Upon its completion, he remained in Traben-Trarbach.

His son, Matthias Engel (1857–1923), worked alongside architects as an artist, designer, and master builder, while simultaneously cultivating his own distinct style. He left behind buildings that continue to define the townscape to this day: brick industrial structures, Moselle-style architecture, Neo-Romanesque funerary monuments, Art Nouveau designs, and Eclectic-style edifices. He sought neither the limelight nor public acclaim. Perhaps for that very reason, much of what he created has remained unacknowledged.

As the last surviving descendant of Matthias Engel, I view it as both my duty and my responsibility to preserve their memory. If I do not now document their work, their life paths, and their decisions, the name Matthias Engel risks fading away amidst the clamor of the modern age. Yet, without these two men, Traben-Trarbach would not be the Traben-Trarbach we know today.

Their influence is not merely a chapter in the city's history; it is woven into its very fabric—subtle, yet indelible.

Family History

The history of the Engel family, pieced together from old documents, letters, and photographs—is undoubtedly incomplete; indeed, I hope to add much more to it with the help of my readers. Please note that the name Matthias is sometimes spelled with a single "t" and at other times with a double "tt."

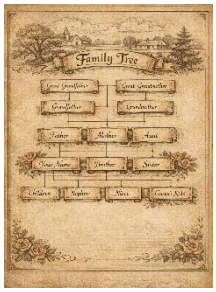
The Engel family tree reveals that the first Matthias was married three times. Two of his sons lived in Traben-Trarbach: Richard in Trarbach and Matthias in Traben. They were born of different mothers.

Being married multiple times was not an uncommon occurrence. For a widower with several children, remarriage was often a necessity.

During the course of my research, I stumbled upon information that had previously been unknown to me—information, in fact, that had remained entirely unknown to the public until 2024. This discovery prompts one to reflect on just how much remains undiscovered. When one arranges his body of work chronologically, the apparent gaps in his creative output and productivity become all the more puzzling.

Regarding the first Matthias Engel, his only known contribution is his work on the War Memorial. Yet, he lived in Traben-Trarbach for many years, was married twice, and had children; is it truly conceivable that his sole professional undertaking was his involvement with the War Memorial? That seems highly improbable.

The second Matthias Engel was involved in the construction of structures spanning a wide variety of architectural styles, requiring a distinct set of specialized skills and technical expertise. A discovery that was entirely new to me and therefore utterly astonishing—was a letter found within the Melzheimer Mausoleum, which was opened to the public in 2024. Are there other, similar monuments built by Engel still waiting to be discovered? They would surely have to be located somewhere in the vicinity. But where?



The First Matthias Engel and the War Memorial

The first Matthias—or Mathias—Engel lived from 1824 to 1890 in Spangdahlem and Traben-Trarbach. He was a stonemason and master builder. Apart from his work on the war memorial in 1875, I am aware of no other details regarding his professional activities.

The war memorial in Trarbach commemorates the town's fallen soldiers from the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71. It is situated above the town, near the ruins of Grevenburg Castle. From this vantage point, the view of the Moselle Valley is breathtaking. The monument was likely commissioned by the municipality or a veterans' association—as was customary at the time—and continues to serve as a place of remembrance and historical commemoration to this day.

During my childhood, on Easter, May 1st, Ascension Day, and Pentecost, a lone trumpeter would stand at the foot of the monument and play mournful, evocative melodies.

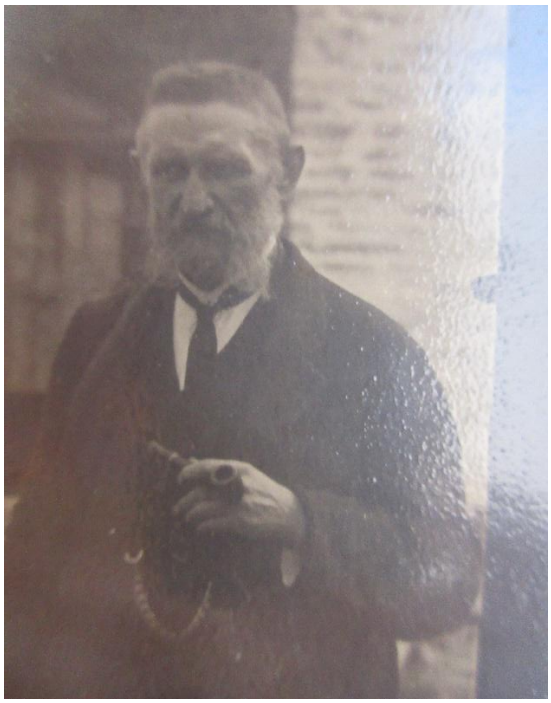
On our walks to the Grevenburg—passing by the war memorial—my grandmother would show me the name of her grandfather—my great-great-grandfather—at the foot of the pedestal. We would reach through the wrought-iron fence to clear away the weeds as best we could, just to reveal his name; but as my grandmother grew older, I moved away, and the path fell into disrepair, the weeds were left to grow unchecked—tall and thick.

After many years of neglect, the overgrowth grew so high that the names could no longer be discerned. When the memorial was renovated a few years ago, the inscription on the pedestal was either covered over or removed entirely.

Perhaps someone has records or photographs showing the names of the builders on the pedestal and would be willing to share them with me.

The second Matthias Engel
And
A Chronological Overview of His Buildings

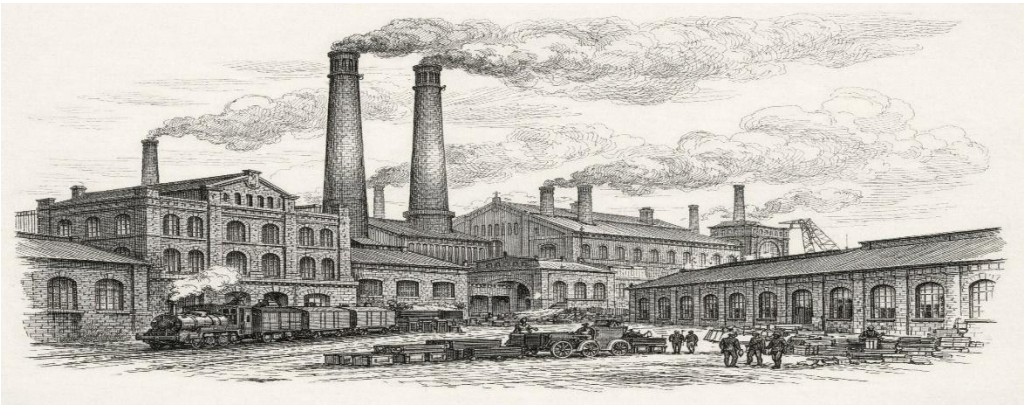
The second Matthias Engel was the eldest son from his father's second marriage. He lived from 1857 to 1923 and followed in his father's footsteps. As a building contractor, he was involved in the construction of structures in the styles of brick industrial architecture, Moselle architecture, Neo-Romanesque funerary architecture, Art Nouveau, and Eclecticism.



Brick Industrial Architecture

This architectural style emerged during Germany's rapid industrialization in the late 19th century. It embodies a blend of functionality, craftsmanship, and regional pride—qualities frequently observed in factories, warehouses, and utility buildings such as the Borsig Locomotive Works in Berlin, the Phoenix-West Blast Furnace Plant in Dortmund, the Royal Porcelain Manufactory in Berlin, or the Krupp Works in Essen, to name just a few.

This style was an integral part of the industrial boom of the *Gründerzeit* era, when Germany was rapidly expanding its coal, steel, and mechanical engineering industries. It fused functionality with architectural pride, utilizing brick not only for its durability but also for the visual rhythm it imparted.



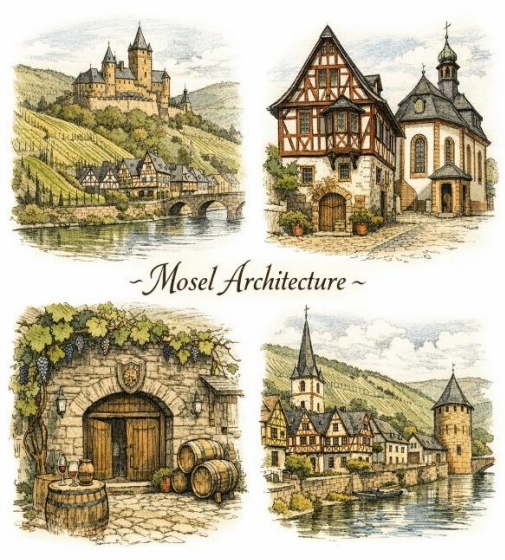
Power Station 1887

The power station is the only building of its kind in Traben-Trarbach and receives little recognition, even though it is just as worthy of appreciation as the large-scale industrial complexes. It was constructed between 1887 and 1890 by Matthias Engel and remained in operation until 1918. As a coal-fired power plant, it powered Germany's first electric street lighting system. At the time, Traben-Trarbach was considered one of the most highly electrified towns in Germany.

The building stands out due to its simple, earthy-brown façade. In its geometric design, every single brick is laid with artistic precision—a testament to purposefulness and strength. The masterful brickwork accentuates the large, round-arched windows.

Moselle Architecture

Characteristic of Moselle architecture are half-timbered houses, featuring exposed wooden frames filled with plaster panels. The roofs, clad in locally quarried slate, are steeply pitched to shed rain and snow. Due to the narrow plots of land, the buildings are often multi-storied, each featuring underground wine cellars with living quarters situated above. Particularly noteworthy are the deep, consistently cool cellars, carved deep into the hillside—perfect for storing wine barrels.



Moselhaus 1888

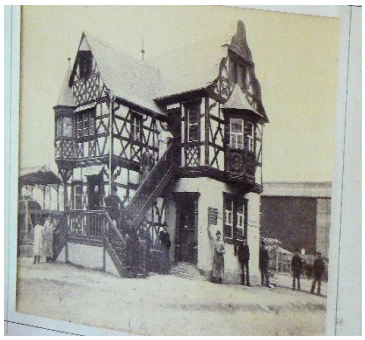
Matthias Engel wurde eingeladen an einem kulturellen Austausch bei der 1888er Weltausstellung in Brüssel teilzunehmen, um den Baustil der Mosel zu vertreten. Obwohl es eine industrielle Ausstellung war, wurden Bauinnovationen als kulturelle und kuriose Neuigkeiten eingeschlossen.

Als Prototyp für den Erker seines Moselhauses baute er einen Erker in das Krips-Haus an der nordwestlichen Ecke Rottmannstraße/Luisenstraße ein. Leider haben Renovierungsarbeiten den ursprünglichen Entwurf fast bis zur Unkenntlichkeit verändert.

Das Moselhaus mit seinem steilen Schieferdach, der Fachwerkfassade und dem Erker repräsentierte die Weinkultur und -tradition der Moselregion. So stand es stolz inmitten wissenschaftlicher Ausstellungen und Pavillons aus Stahl und Glas.

Spuren des Stils sind überall in der Stadt zu finden, insbesondere entlang der Kirchstraße in der Nähe des Marktplatzes. Die Alte Ratsschänke ist ein perfektes Beispiel.

Der architektonische und kulturelle Wert des Moselhauses führte zur Verleihung des Diplome D‘Encouragement.



Moselle House 1888

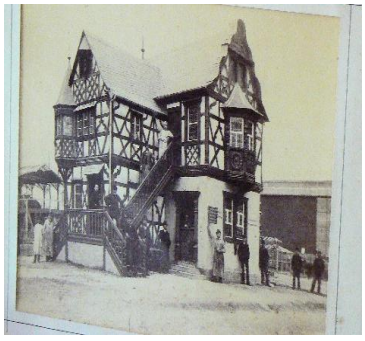
Matthias Engel was invited to participate in a cultural exchange at the 1888 World's Fair in Brussels to represent the architectural style of the Moselle region. Although it was an industrial exhibition, architectural innovations were included as cultural and curious novelties.

As a prototype for the bay window of his Moselhaus, he installed a bay window on the Krips House, located at the northwestern corner of Rottmannstraße and Luisenstraße. Unfortunately, subsequent renovations have altered the original design almost beyond recognition.

With its steep slate roof, half-timbered façade, and bay window, the Moselhaus represented the wine culture and traditions of the Moselle region. Thus, it stood proudly amidst scientific exhibits and pavilions of steel and glass.

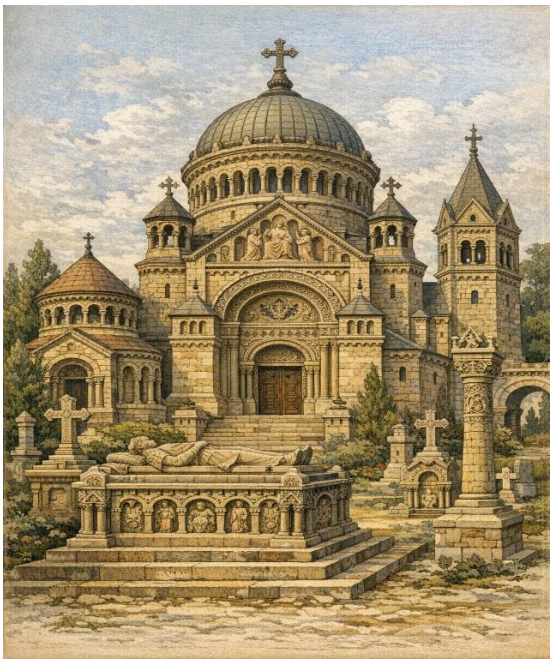
Traces of this style can be found throughout the city, particularly along Kirchstraße near the market square. The *Alte Ratsschänke* serves as a perfect example.

The architectural and cultural significance of the Moselhaus earned the Diplôme d’Encouragement.



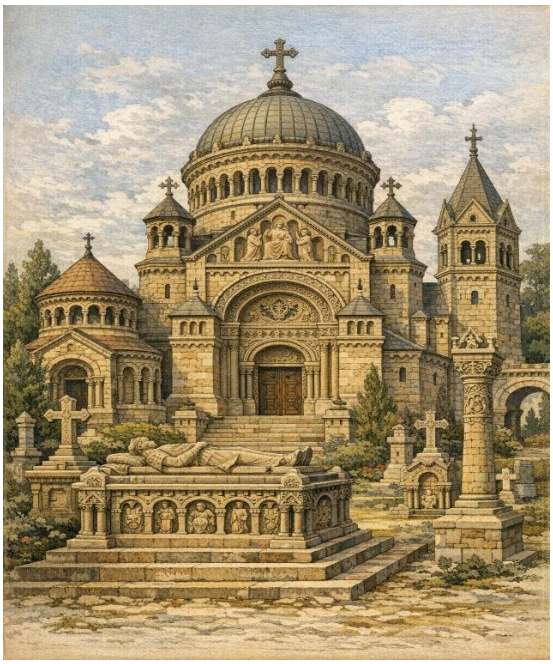
Neoromanische Sepulkral Architektur

Wesentliche Merkmale der neuromanischen Grabarchitektur sind Rundbögen, dicke Mauern, Türme und Türmchen. Die symmetrischen Bauten mit quadratischem oder kreuzförmigem Grundriss eignen sich gut für die Grabarchitektur. Dieser Stil interpretiert mittelalterliche romanische Formen für Gedenk- und Begräbnisbauten neu und war besonders im späten 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert in Europa und den USA beliebt. In Orten wie Traben-Trarbach betonen neuromanische Mausoleen das Prestige und die kulturellen Ambitionen prominenter Familien.



Neo-Romanesque Sepulchral Architecture

Key characteristics of Neo-Romanesque funerary architecture include round arches, thick walls, towers, and turrets. These symmetrical structures, featuring square or cruciform ground plans, are well-suited for funerary architecture. This style reinterprets medieval Romanesque forms for commemorative and burial structures and was particularly popular in Europe and the United States during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In places such as Traben-Trarbach, Neo-Romanesque mausoleums underscore the prestige and cultural aspirations of prominent families.

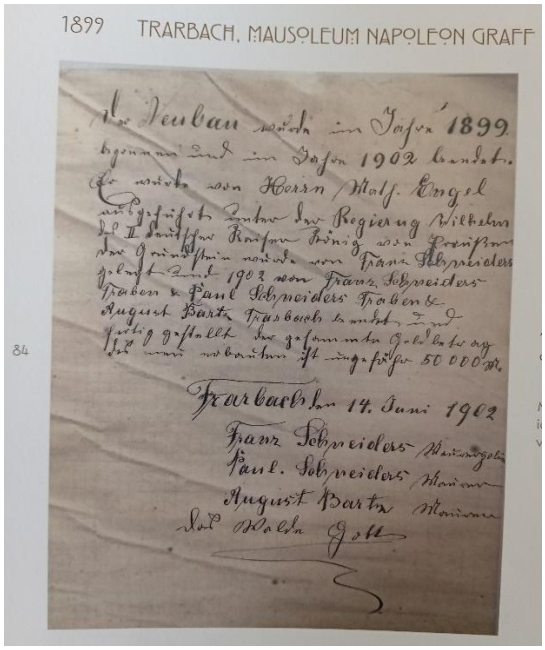


Melzheim Mausoleum, 1899

The Melzheim Mausoleum, built by Matthias Engel, is an impressive example of Neo-Romanesque funerary architecture. Commissioned by the Melsheimer family, it was constructed between 1899 and 1902 on the southern edge of the Protestant cemetery in Trarbach. It features a square ground plan, a central dome, and four corner turrets adorned with rich figural ornamentation. One side remains open, framed by a large round arch. The structure is partially embedded into the hillside.

According to the German Foundation for Monument Protection (Deutsche Stiftung Denkmalschutz), the building had to be closed and secured due to the risk of structural collapse. The exterior shell and dome structure underwent structural reinforcement, a process completed by the end of 2024. Restoration of the interior began in late 2024 and is currently ongoing.

Zu Beginn der Restaurierung wurde eine Flasche mit einem Dokument gefunden.


1899 TRARBACH. MAUSOLEUM NAPOLEON GRAFF
Der Neubau wurde im Jahre 1899
begonnen und im Jahre 1902 beendet.
Er wurde von Herrn Matth. Engel
ausgeführt unter der Regierung Wilhelm
des II deutscher Kaiser König von Preußen
Der Grundstein wurde von Franz Schneiders
gelegt und 1902 von Franz Schneiders
Traben & Paul Schneiders Traben &
August Bartz Trarbach beendet und
fertig gestellt Der gesammte Geldbetrag
des neu erbauten ist ungefähr 50 000 M.
Trarbach den 14. Juni 1902
Franz Schneiders Maurermeister
Paul Schneiders Maurer
August Bartz Maurer
Nach Mosel Gott

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Trarbach den 14,. Juni 1902

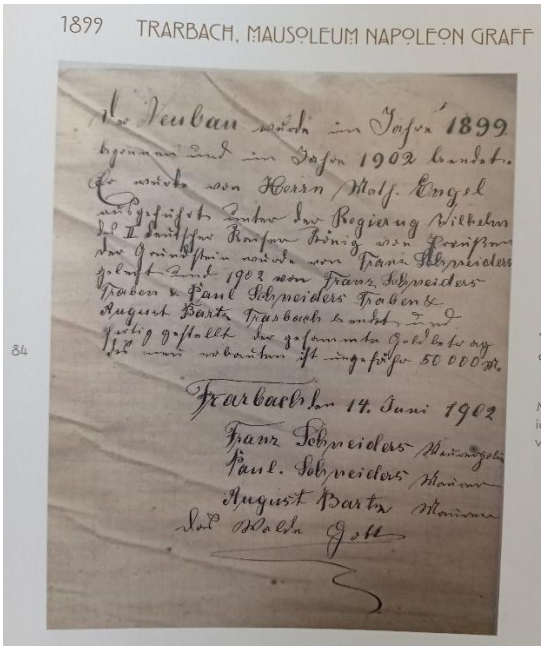
Franz Schneiders Maurer

Paul Schneiders Maurer

August Bartz Maurer

Das walde Gott

At the beginning of the restoration, a bottle containing a document was found.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Trarbach den 14,. Juni 1902

Franz Schneiders Maurer

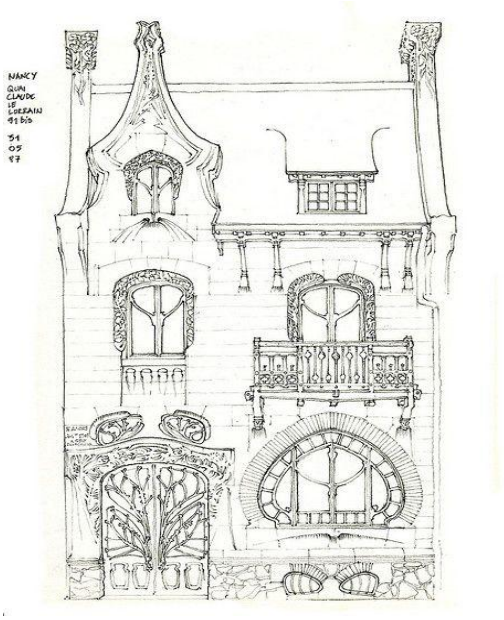
Paul Schneiders Maurer

August Bartz Maurer

Das walde Gott

Art Nouveau

The most renowned features of Traben-Trarbach are the Art Nouveau buildings designed by the Berlin architect Bruno Möhring. Art Nouveau developed in Germany and Austria between 1895 and 1920 and represents the European variant of the international Art Nouveau movement. Characteristic features include flowing, organic lines inspired by nature, floral motifs, arabesques, and elegant curves—forms that later evolved into more abstract and geometric shapes.



As a master builder, stonemason, and consultant, Matthias Engel participated in most of Möhring's projects. As an artist, he created his own drawings in the Art Nouveau style. Little of his work has survived. Some pieces are preserved at the Mittelmosel Museum in Traben-Trarbach, while others were sold. If any reader knows the whereabouts of additional drawings, I would be very grateful for photographs.

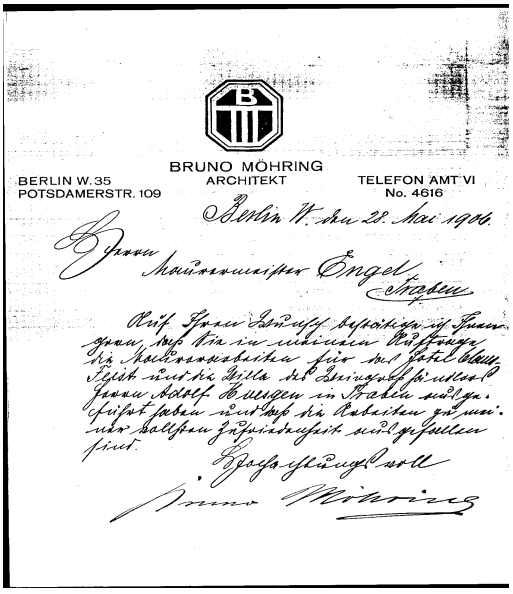
Hotel Clauss-Feist—today the Romantik Jugendstilhotel Bellevue—1903

The original Hotel Clauss-Feist dated back to the first half of the 19th century and was completely destroyed by a major fire in 1900. Bruno Möhring designed the new hotel and commissioned Matthias Engel as its master builder.

The hotel is the epitome of classic Art Nouveau—not only in its architecture but down to the very last detail: in its artistic light fixtures, wall paintings and frescoes, intricate railings, ornamental embellishments, and imaginative décor. It resembles a fairytale castle, where one almost expects to see Rapunzel gazing out from the highest window and letting down her golden hair. "Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair, so that I may climb up the golden stairs."

It appears that Möhring and Engel did not get along well. The reason for this may have been Mathias's friendship with the Bösebeck family—and their potential desire for Engel to become the construction manager—or, as is often the case, tensions arising from disagreements over details between the architect and the construction manager. The architect possesses the vision and imagination; the construction manager, the technical expertise.

These disagreements may have been the reason behind Möhring's condescending letter to my great-grandfather.



BRUNO MÖHRING
ARCHITEKT

BERLIN W. 35
POTSDAMERSTR. 109

TELEFON AMT VI
No. 4616

Berlin W. den 28. Mai 1906.

Herrn Maurermeister Engel
Traben

Auf Ihren Wunsch bestätige ich Ihnen gern, daß Sie in meinem Auftrage die Maurerarbeiten für das Hotel Clauß-Feist und die Villa des Weingroßhändlers Herrn Adolf Hüsgen in Traben ausgeführt haben und daß die Arbeiten zu meiner vollen Zufriedenheit ausgefallen sind.

Hochachtungsvoll

Bruno Möhring

Bruno Moehring

Architect

Berlin W 35 *Telephone: Exchange VI*

Potsdamerstr. 109 *No. 4616*

Berlin, May 28, 1906

Mr. Engel, Master Mason, Traben

At your request, I am pleased to confirm that, acting on my behalf, you executed the masonry work for the Hotel Clauss-Feist and the villa of the wine wholesaler Mr. Adolph Hüsgen in Traben, and that the work was carried out to my complete satisfaction.

Respectfully yours,

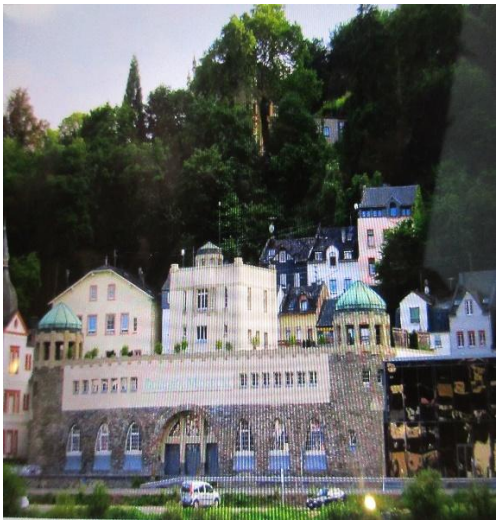
Bruno Möhring

Julius Kayser House and Wine Cellar (1905)

Today: Buddha Museum

Bruno Möhring was the architect who designed this Art Nouveau building and its cellar. Construction was carried out between 1905 and 1906 by Matthias Engel and other local craftsmen, commissioned by Julius Kayser. It is the only Art Nouveau winery in the region.

Situated on the riverbank, this massive building—featuring ornate facades, curving wrought-iron details, spacious interiors, and a large roof garden—was restored by Wolfgang Preuß and now houses over 2,000 Buddha figures.



Eclecticism

Eclecticism is an architectural style that combines elements from various historical building forms. It allows for creative freedom and blends the familiar with the new.

Eclecticism is closely linked to the concept of freedom of expression. It offers architects the opportunity to break free from rigid stylistic rules and to design spaces that reflect personal, cultural, or social identity—by artfully weaving together historical and global influences. It emerged during an era of rapid change, when architects consciously rejected the strictness of individual stylistic movements and pursued a freer, more expressive approach. The term itself derives from the Greek *eklektikos*, meaning "selective"—and therein lies the very essence of eclecticism: in the deliberate selection and combination of elements drawn from diverse eras, cultures, and artistic movements.

Matthias Engel Family Residence, Poststraße 11, Traben, 1901

In 1901, Matthias Engel built his family residence at Poststraße 11 in Traben. The three-story house stands tall and square; its proportions reflect the self-assured, ordered character of bourgeois residential architecture around the turn of the century.

Inspired by the Neo-Renaissance, the house presents a graceful, harmonious façade featuring classical proportions. It rests upon a solid plinth of red sandstone, which lends it warmth and durability. This same material recurs in the window sills of the first, second, and attic floors, delineating the levels with a continuous horizontal line. Each window is framed in red sandstone, creating rhythmic accents. This serves to harmoniously unify the façade while emphasizing both the symmetry and the craftsmanship of the building.

The light-colored limestone walls visually lighten the building's overall appearance, forming a gentle contrast to the red sandstone details; furthermore, the steep roof—concealed from the front view by a parapet—is characteristic of Moselle architecture.

Above the windows are sculptural heads—possibly depictions of local citizens—and Art Nouveau ornaments created by Engel's sculptor friend, Bernhard Wendhut. These decorative elements attest to the building's embrace of the historicist architecture of the early 20th century, combining Art Nouveau motifs with Neo-Romanesque austerity.

The gable is concealed behind a rounded parapet that lends height and dignity to the façade. Once, an eagle—a symbol of the civic authority of the German Empire—adorned the gable, emphasizing the building's symbolic presence and architectural sophistication. It was later removed for safety reasons; however, fragments of the sculpture were preserved in the attic and may still lie tucked away in some corner there.

Adjoining the house is a large terrace that leads to an outbuilding. Originally, the terrace was bordered by a balustrade of sandstone blocks, which underscored its massive appearance. Unfortunately, in the 1950s, this was replaced by an iron railing that is completely out of keeping with the style. A second building—situated opposite the terrace and forming a contrast to the main house—is constructed in half-timbered style and adorned with limestone-colored stucco and red-sandstone-colored woodwork, lending the overall ensemble a touch of the medieval.

The house, the terrace, and the second building constitute a true experiment in eclecticism, blending styles ranging from the Middle Ages to the present day.

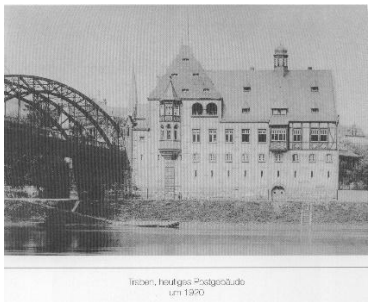
The Imperial Post Office in Traben, 1908

Built in 1908 by Matthias Engel, the post office in Traben-Trarbach is an example of Historicist architecture, combining Neo-Romanesque elements with regional Moselle styles. The building evokes the image of a small castle situated on the banks of the Moselle River. Its massive, almost fortress-like character resembles medieval fortifications, while its ornamental details reflect the imperial pride of the German Empire.

The building's architectural design is deliberately chosen and imposing: its foundation consists of rough basalt blocks, providing a solid, enduring base. Above this, light-colored limestone walls lend the structure a lighter, more harmonious appearance. Red sandstone is used for the window surrounds and decorative elements, adding warmth and a regional flair. The bay window projecting from the façade enhances the building's castle-like form and historical charm, while the steep gables—featuring tapering dormers clad entirely in slate—embody the quintessential Moselle style.

The roof and the bay window are crowned by small round turrets, also clad entirely in slate, which further reinforce the castle-like impression. Above the entrance, a relief of the Imperial Eagle—clutching a post horn in its talons—serves as a proud symbol of the Imperial era, expressing both the building's civic function and its national identity.

It is the only structure in Traben-Trarbach to bear the name of Matthias Engel.



Recognition

Engel's contributions to the architectural landscape of Traben-Trarbach were acknowledged in the mayor's obituary in 1923.

Nachruf.

Gestern starb nach schwerem Leiden

Herr Baumeister

Matthias Engel.

Seit längeren Jahren war er Bausachverständiger und Berater der Stadt. Nimmermüde Arbeitskraft und eiserne Pflichttreue zeichneten diesen seltenen Mann aus, welcher noch in der letzten Zeit, obschon schwer erkrankt, seinen Dienst weiter zu versehen suchte. Sein bescheidenes, schlichtes und stets hilfsbereites Wesen sichern ihm die Achtung Aller, welche ihn kannten. Die Stadt Traben-Trarbach verdankt seiner ausgezeichneten Beratung, unbestechlichen Ehrenhaftigkeit und rastlosen Tätigkeit Vieles und wird sein Andenken stets in Ehren halten.

Traben-Trarbach, den 7. Juli 1923.

Namens der Stadtverwaltung und der städtischen Körperschaften:

Der Bürgermeister.

J. V.: Dr. van Spankeren

Obituary

Yesterday, after a severe and prolonged illness,

Mr. Master Builder

Matthias Engel

passed away.

For many years, he served as the City's building expert and advisor. Tireless industry and an unwavering devotion to duty distinguished this exceptional man, who, even in his final days—despite being gravely ill—endeavored to continue performing his duties. His modest, unassuming, and ever-helpful nature earned him the respect of all who knew him. The City of Traben-Trarbach owes a great debt to his excellent counsel, unimpeachable integrity, and tireless efforts, and will forever cherish his memory.

Traben-Trarbach, July 7, 1923

On behalf of the City Administration and

the Municipal Bodies:

The Mayor

(Signed): Dr. von Spankeren

Tales and Memories

On the ground floor of the house were Matthias's office, two living rooms, and the kitchen. The only toilet of the house was also located on the ground floor. The family's bedrooms were on the second floor, the rooms for the housemaids and servants were on the third floor. Above that was the attic.

A large terrace extended from the house to a second building. The cellar began beneath the terrace and continued underground beneath the house itself. Under the terrace were stalls for one or two horses, as well as storage rooms for building materials, firewood, coal, and briquettes. Adjoining this was a laundry room—which also served as a utility kitchen for canning and preserving fruit—along with additional rooms for storing firewood and coal. Deeper within the cool earth lay a cellar for storing food, winter fruit, and wine. Later, my great-aunt also cultivated mushrooms in one corner.

For me—a child with a terrible fear of spiders—the rooms beneath the house were terrifying. Dark, and illuminated by only a single dim lightbulb in each room, I hated having to go down to the cellar to fetch potatoes or apples.

From the terrace, a high step led into a two-story outbuilding. In Father Engel's day, it had served as a hayloft. In the basement level, there was a compost heap for horse manure, old straw, and kitchen scraps. The outbuilding was my favorite place. During my childhood, I would secretly climb the rickety ladder up to the loft. The wooden floorboards would bow with every step. Although I was forbidden from climbing around up there, the boxes filled with old things and newspapers were simply too tempting. I wonder if they are still there? On the other side of the house—where the parking lot is today—there once stood a beautiful garden featuring a cherry tree, gooseberry bushes, black and red currant bushes, a profusion of flowers, lilac trees, and grapevines climbing along the fence. The very first flowers to bloom as the snow melted were snowdrops.

Luisenstraße led from Rottmannstraße, winding through various gardens alongside the house, and continued on the other side of Poststraße. I had always wished that one of the windows could be converted into a door to provide direct access to the garden. However, I was told that the width of Luisenstraße had to be kept free of any construction, as it was destined to be developed into a proper road one day. When I inquired with the City of Traben-Trarbach, no such records could be found, and the area in question was officially designated as buildable land.

The Family

Matthias Engel and his wife Johanna, née Hüls, had six children, two of whom died in childhood. According to his children's accounts, Matthias appears to have been strong-willed and something of a loner. Despite invitations and requests, he could not be persuaded to participate in local politics.

The Engels were a musical family; they played the piano, the lute, and the zither. Everyone sang, and I learned many of the old folk melodies from my grandmother and great-aunts. Everyone also painted and drew, carved, embroidered, made bobbin lace, and crafted. They loved animals and flowers. Matthias Engel enjoyed drawing. Many of his works were sold, and some are preserved today in the Middle Moselle Museum in Traben.

Matthias maintained a warm friendship with the Bösebeck family, proprietors of the Hotel Clauss-Feist. This friendship was continued and cherished by the descendants of both families well into the 1950s. As a child, I was often allowed to attend the families' shared dinners. He was also friends with Bernhard Wendhut—likely because they had much in common and collaborated professionally.

He enjoyed hunting, and his dog, Tell, was his constant companion. When Tell grew old and fell ill, Matthias had to shoot him. My grandmother recounted that he wept bitterly—the only time she ever saw him cry.

His son, Franz, served as a ship's doctor during the First World War and subsequently settled in Düsseldorf. The eldest daughter, Johanna, had two children and a granddaughter. The second daughter, Catharina, became a dentist. The youngest daughter, Margarete, wanted to attend art school, but her request was denied.

Matthias Engel had already passed away by the time I was born. I still remember my great-grandmother very well. She always sat in a large, round armchair with armrests and a rush-woven seat; as a small child, I absolutely loved climbing onto her lap. In the 1970s, I wanted to have the chair restored, but unfortunately, it was destroyed during the process.

Were it not for the two Matthias Engel, Traben-Trarbach would look very different today. As of 2023, the family’s gravestone still stands preserved in the Traben cemetery. I hope that a place of honor can be found for it.

One Mystery Yet to Be Solved

The Wall Clock: Matthias acted as a guarantor for someone he evidently trusted, yet that person failed to fulfill their obligations. This forced him to sell almost all of his possessions—save for the family home and a few small plots of land. He never revealed to anyone who this person was, but according to my grandmother, the experience left him deeply embittered. One day, he came home with a wall clock tucked under his arm. Was it some form of payment for the debt? The letters R and A appear on the pendulum. If anyone knows who originally owned this clock, I would be very grateful for any leads.

Contact Information:
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About the author:

Dagmar Pelzer was born in Germany and emigrated to the United States where she received her baccalaureate degree in Politics and Philosophy, her Master of Science in Education, her Doctorate in Adult Education Leadership. She attended City University of New York, New York University, Florida International University, and Nova University.

She has published papers in E R I C (Enterprise for Research, Innovation and Knowledge), on Amazon, archive.org, and various journals. Presently, she enjoys writing news stories that she distributes to friends and interested followers world-wide.